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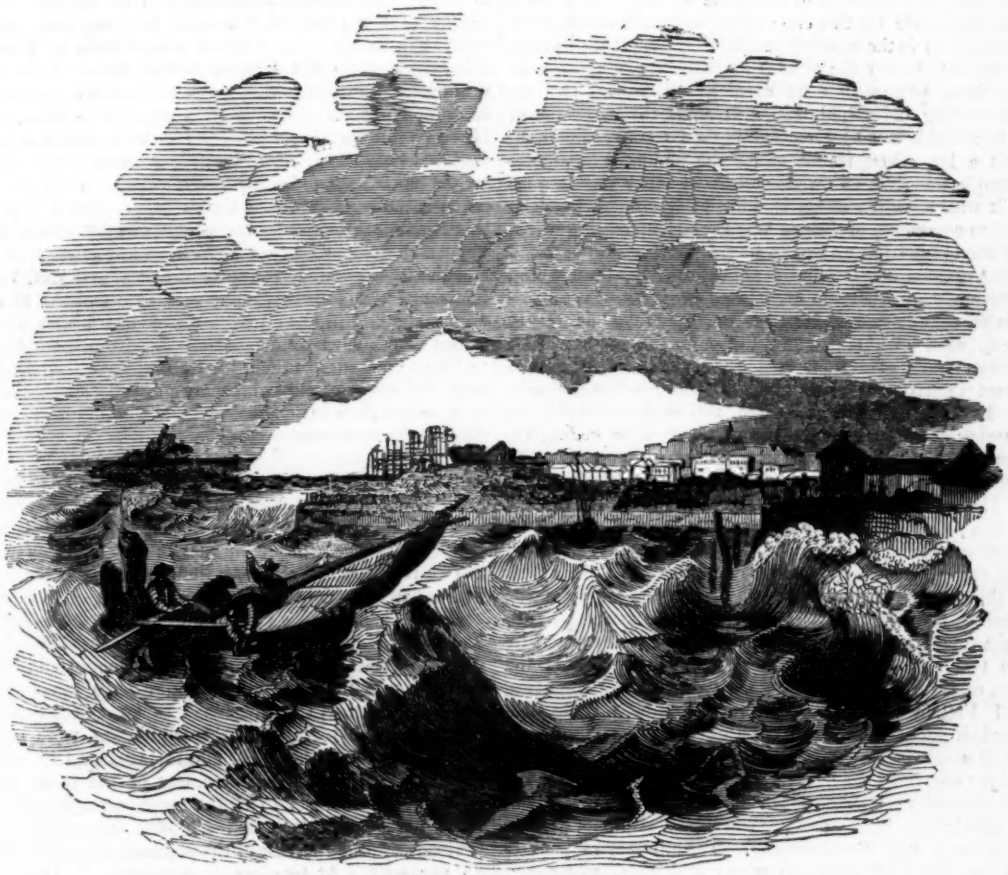
HÂVRE DE GRACE.



[Hâvre and Cape La Hève.]

THE fourteen departments which the basin of the Seine comprises contain about one-sixth of the total population of France. In one of these departments there is the capital, with its million of inhabitants; and in another, Rouen, the Manchester of France. The soil of this region is fertile, and agriculture is in an advanced state. Greater industry and superior resources enable the population to command a larger share of necessaries and luxuries than twice the number of the population enjoy in those parts of France which are less favoured by nature and circumstances. The Seine, and its tributaries the Aube, the Yonne, the Marne, the Oise, the Eure, and the Rille, with the Aisne, an affluent of the Oise, and the Ourcq and Grand Morin, affluents of the Marne, are navigable for an aggregate length of nearly one thousand miles. Thus the interchange of raw materials and manufactures is rendered easy throughout the whole of this important portion of the country. The two great ports of the basin of the Seine are Rouen and Hâvre. Rouen is about the same distance from the sea as London, and during the middle ages engrossed the maritime commerce of the Seine. Vessels of from 250 to 300 tons can get up to the town. Perhaps, however, the principal cause which rendered Rouen a place of commercial importance during the unsettled periods of European history was the greater security which it offered, as the ports on the coast were exposed to the attacks of pirates and other rovers of the seas. In the sixteenth century these enemies were no longer dreaded, and Hâvre, then a small place, inhabited by fishermen, from its situation at the mouth of the Seine, was much resorted to by mariners. In 1509 Louis XII. laid the foundations of a town. His successor, Francis I., surrounded it with walls, and in 1618 the Cardinal Richelieu added a strong citadel to the fortifications. Louis XVI. and Napoleon both encouraged the prosperity of Hâvre, and, from about the year 1783, its commercial prosperity has been constantly increasing, and consuls from the principal commercial nations of the world now reside there. Hâvre is the only eligible harbour between this portion of the coast and Cherbourg. It is on the right bank of the Seine, which is here several miles wide. There are two roadsteads, and the harbour

consists of three basins in the heart of the town, communicating with each other, and capable of containing 500 vessels, including the largest merchant ships. The tide rises to a height of from twenty-two to twenty-seven feet, and the vessels are always afloat in the harbour. Cape la Hève, 2½ miles west of the town, is a headland about 130 yards high, on which there are two handsome lighthouses about 50 feet high.

A short time before the Revolution of 1789, Rouen made an effort to obtain a share of foreign commerce, which its rival at the mouth of the river had engrossed. When ships of a large size began to be employed in distant voyages, the navigation of the Seine up to Rouen was not considered safe for this class of vessels, and Rouen only participated in the coasting-trade. But about the middle of the last century the obstacles which the navigation of the Seine presented were carefully examined, and an enterprising individual, conceiving that they were not of so formidable a nature as had been generally supposed, built a large vessel suitable for the foreign trade. His example was soon followed, and many other vessels were built with a similar object by joint-stock companies. The foreign commerce of Rouen was rapidly increasing when the Revolution put an end to its prosperity. Since 1814 it has revived, but Rouen has not obtained the rank which it formerly occupied, probably in consequence of the direction of capital and industry to manufactures, as well as the inferiority of its situation to the port of Hâvre. The foreign trade of Rouen is however respectable, and a direct intercourse is maintained with Portugal, Spain, the Levant, the north of Europe, and with America; the number of vessels engaged in foreign trade exceeding one hundred annually, while nearly the same number of foreign vessels are entered inwards. The foreign trade of Hâvre is more than five times greater then that of Rouen; but the quantity of goods brought to Rouen by coasting vessels, and barges, which navigate the rivers and canals, is as eight to five, compared with the extent of this branch of the trade at Hâvre: one-fourth of the coasting trade carried on between the different ports of France situated on the Atlantic sea-board is engrossed by the two ports. In 1836 there arrived inwards at the port of Hâvre 603 vessels belonging to foreign countries, 501 French vessels engaged in the foreign trade, 185 English packets, 109 large coasting vessels, besides nearly 3000 small vessels navigating the Seine and its tributaries. Hâvre engrosses the largest share of the trade between France and the United States of America. Packets sail regularly for New York, Vera Cruz, Bahia, Lisbon, Hamburg, and Southampton. The number of packets on the New York station is twelve; and with Amsterdam, Hamburg, Southampton, Rouen, and Paris, the intercourse is maintained by steam-boats.

The value of the imports at Hâvre in 1829 amounted to 10,000,000*l.*; the imports of raw cotton amounting to 1,100,000*l.*; and of sugar to 1,800,000*l.* Hâvre and Marseilles are the only ports of France in which raw cotton is admitted. Other imports of Hâvre consisted of coffee, indigo, dye-woods, hides, iron, tin. The customs' duty amounts to 1,000,000*l.* annually. The usual exports are silk and woollen goods, wines, brandies, lace, gloves, perfumery, trinkets, and articles of Parisian manufacture, perfumery, &c. Soap, starch, vitriol, and earthenware are manufactured in the town, and there are also breweries, sugar-refining-houses, shipyards, and rope-manufactories, which give employment to considerable numbers. Many seamen are employed in the herring, cod, and whale fisheries; and the wives of sailors and artisans obtain work as lace-makers.

The town is divided into the old and new quarters, the houses in the former being ill-built, while those of the new quarter are much superior in appearance, and the streets are better lighted. Ingouville is a populous and pleasant suburb, containing the country-houses of the merchants. The population of the town and suburbs does not exceed 30,000. The custom-house is a large building, but the public buildings are, on the whole, rather of an inferior order. There is a fine public square planted with trees, which forms an agreeable promenade. The principal local institutions are a court for the settlement of commercial disputes, several literary and scientific establishments, a public library, containing above 15,000 volumes, a museum of natural history, a high school and school of navigation, and a school for geometry applied to the arts.

The leading object of commercial policy in France is to render that country independent of all others for its supply of the principal articles of consumption. If an article can be produced cheaper abroad than in France, it is subjected to the highest rate of duty. The home producer, who labours under disadvantages which do not exist in other countries, is thus enabled to charge the highest price for his commodities, and the nation at large suffers a heavy loss. To buy a dear instead of a cheap article is thought to be the better policy, on the ground that the money is spent in the country. But it happens that there are some things which can be obtained in France cheaper and better than from any other country; and the injury which the prohibitive system does to the interest of the French producer is in this case at once apparent; and in the other case, the loss which is sustained could be easily demonstrated. French wines give to France unbounded facilities for exchange with English iron, and other articles which are produced more cheaply in England than in France, and the commerce of nearly sixty millions of people, situated so near to each other, would be immense if it were conducted on sounder principles. But in France it is considered better to have a limited home-market than an extensive foreign demand; and capital is thus lost in the forced production of articles at a dear rate, while the market is lost for those which can be raised at a lower cost than in any other country. The extent to which the foreign commerce of France has been cramped by this system may be shown by figures. In 1787 the value of the imports amounted to 25,000,000*l.*, and 888,868 tons of shipping were employed; while in 1830, the imports, which would have amounted to 40,000,000*l.*, had they increased to an extent commensurate with the increase of the population, were only of the value of 25,500,000*l.*, employing 629,139 tons of shipping. Since the abandonment of the more liberal commercial system of 1787, the tonnage employed in the foreign trade has decreased 170,000 tons, and in comparison with the increase of the population has retrograded 35 per cent. At two less distant intervals (1828 and 1834) the commercial shipping of France was as follows:—In 1828, ships 14,322, tonnage 692,125; in 1834, number of ships 15,025, tonnage 647,107. In 1828 the tonnage of vessels inscribed in the maritime district of Rouen (comprising Hâvre) was 106,737, and in 1833, only 96,481. The vessels registered in France in the years 1828 and 1834 may be classed as follows:—

	1828.	1834.
Above 300 tons . . .	245	246
One hundred and under 300 .	1,927	1,739
Above 30 and under 100 .	2,675	2,522
Of and under 30 . . .	9,475	10,518

The commercial marine of France employs, in long voyages, in the great fisheries, and the great coasting trade, not more than about 27,000 seamen, and 23,000 others are engaged in the small coasting craft. Recruits are taken for the navy from the first class under extraordinary circumstances only; and from the second, only under an emergency still more urgent. Thus the prohibitive system cripples the naval power of France. Since 1787, under a better commercial system, the commerce of England has nearly quadrupled, and its

shipping has more than doubled. Looking to the admirable commercial position of France and England, the extent to which their respective interests have been neglected, and the injury done to them by false views of trade, seem to be worthy of an age of the darkest ignorance. In 1830, France, with its 32,000,000 of inhabitants, received only the fifty-second part of the whole amount of English exports to European countries, and it ranked the ninth country, instead of the first. In the same year England received from France one-seventh of the whole amount of imports, France being second in rank, and Russia the first. In 1831 one-sixth of our imports were from France, and France took only one thirty-eighth part of our exports. The duty on articles imported into England in 1831 amounted to 6,750,000*l.*, and on one-sixth in value of the imports which came from France we charged duties which produced 1,947,173*l.*, the duty on some articles being 500 per cent. The official value of the imports from France, on which nearly two millions sterling duty was thus charged, was 3,055,616*l.*, while on 4,696,371*l.*, the value of the imports from Russia, the duty amounted only to 748,007*l.** The principal articles of export from Great Britain to France in 1831 were—copper, corn, machinery, silk goods, tallow, wool, coals, iron; and the principal articles of import from France into Great Britain were—silk goods, cambrics and laces, brandy, wine, corn and flour, eggs, flax, woollens, madder, and gloves.

MANAGEMENT OF PROVINCIAL BUSINESS.

[Concluded from No. 443.]

In 1601 the laws for the administration of relief to the poor were rendered more complete by the 43rd Eliz., c. 2, which statute, though in practice it had been frequently neglected, continued to be the basis of our system of poor-laws during a period of two hundred and thirty-three years, that is, until 1834, when the Poor-Law Amendment Act was passed. The 43rd Elizabeth embodied the experience of a century of poor-law legislation, and its three chief provisions were—for setting to work children unprovided for by their parents; also all persons who had no occupation or daily employ; and lastly, the relief of the impotent poor. The churchwardens of every parish, and four, three, or two substantial householders, according to the size of the parish, were to be nominated yearly in Easter week, or within a month afterwards, under the hand and seal of two or more justices of the peace, and were to act as overseers of the poor. They were directed by the act to meet together on the business of their office at least once a month in the parish church, on Sunday, after divine service; and, with the consent of the justices, were to raise, by taxation of every inhabitant, such sums as were required for the relief of the poor.

The administration of relief was now entirely in the hands of parish officers, with the exception of the slight control exercised by the justices. In adopting the parish as an administrative division, each with its separate officers, the want of uniformity in the practical operation of the poor-law soon exhibited itself. Honesty, discretion, diligence, and humanity could not be secured in the persons charged with the task of administering relief in several thousand parishes. The 43rd Elizabeth had vested great powers in the parochial officers, but many other acts were required to compel them to discharge their duties aright, and to apply the rates to the single purpose for which they were raised. In the course of time diversity of custom had grown up into all the force of legal authority, and the original objects of the statute of Elizabeth seemed to be forgotten. About the commencement of the last century the magistrates began to interfere with the administration of relief, on the ground that the overseers were guilty of extravagance, negligence, and partiality, and that the poor had become deceitful and imposing. The justices had derived some new powers from an act passed in the reign of William and Mary,* and then, in the early part of the reign of George I., their authority was curtailed,† as the rates had been considerably increased under their superintendence; but power was again placed in their hands by subsequent statutes.

The greatest abuses of the 43rd of Elizabeth originated towards the close of the last century, when various demoralizing modes of administering relief were adopted, originating in the peculiar circumstances of the times and in social difficulties against which the old system of Poor Law were incapable of contending. We need not dwell upon these evils, which are already familiar to most of our readers. Instead of the natural calamity of poverty, which calls forth kindness and sympathy, the perversion of the poor-law of Elizabeth gave existence to a parasitical spirit of pauperism, which extended itself far and wide, and ultimately threatened a most fearful subversion of order and morality. So complicated were these evils, that many years passed over without a sufficient check being given to them; for though all were agreed upon the dangers of the case, but few entertained a hope of the success of any alterative course, and could not see their way to a better system: but at length the difficulty was fairly met, and although so many remedies had to be applied, the restored system combines the two great advantages of the old Poor Law of Queen Elizabeth's reign, with checks by which it shall not, like that law, be liable to perversion and abuse at a future period.

Down to the period when the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed, the overseers in each of the 14,000 parishes of England and Wales were nearly the sole administrators of relief. They levied the poor's rate (with the sanction of the magistrates) and collected and distributed it. The office was filled by farmers and small shopkeepers in rural districts, and in large towns by manufacturers or some of the principal tradesmen. Little valuable experience was ordinarily obtained by the persons who filled the situation of overseer, as where two overseers were appointed, they acted for six months each; and if four, perhaps for three months each; and when they retired from their post, it was filled by others who entered upon it without deriving any advantage from the accumulated experience of their predecessors. In the time of Elizabeth (and this justifies the imperfect machinery provided by the Poor Law of 1601) the distribution of the poor's rate was little more than an occasional dole to the poor; but when a sum amounting to 8,000,000*l.* a year was distributed, a wide door was opened to jobbing, favouritism, and fraud. The parish officers were compelled to submit their accounts to the magistrates, but they were not required to be kept on any uniform plan, and they were also loosely audited. The power which the magistrates exercised of compelling overseers to grant relief, and the manner in which the most dexterous paupers (not the deserving poor) turned this power to account by summoning the overseer from his ordinary business, formed not a small item in the aggregate of evils. The overseer who would not listen to clamour might be coerced by the stealthy silence of the incendiary; for in the burning of corn-stacks did the open contests between the farmer and labourer frequently terminate. The overseer, notwithstanding, exercised much irresponsible power. Many of them were incompetent from ignorance. In Devonshire, one of the revising barristers found one district in which a fourth of the overseers could not write; and one of them was entrusted with the distribution of rates to the amount of 7000*l.* a year. In 1829 an act was passed authorising parishes to appoint paid overseers, who acted as assistants of the annual overseers. They were employed in 3249 parishes at the time of the passing of the 'Amendment Act.' The paid overseers

* Dr. Bowring's 'Report on Commercial Relations of Great Britain and France.'

* 3 and 4 Wm. and Mary, c. 11. † Geo. I., c. 7.

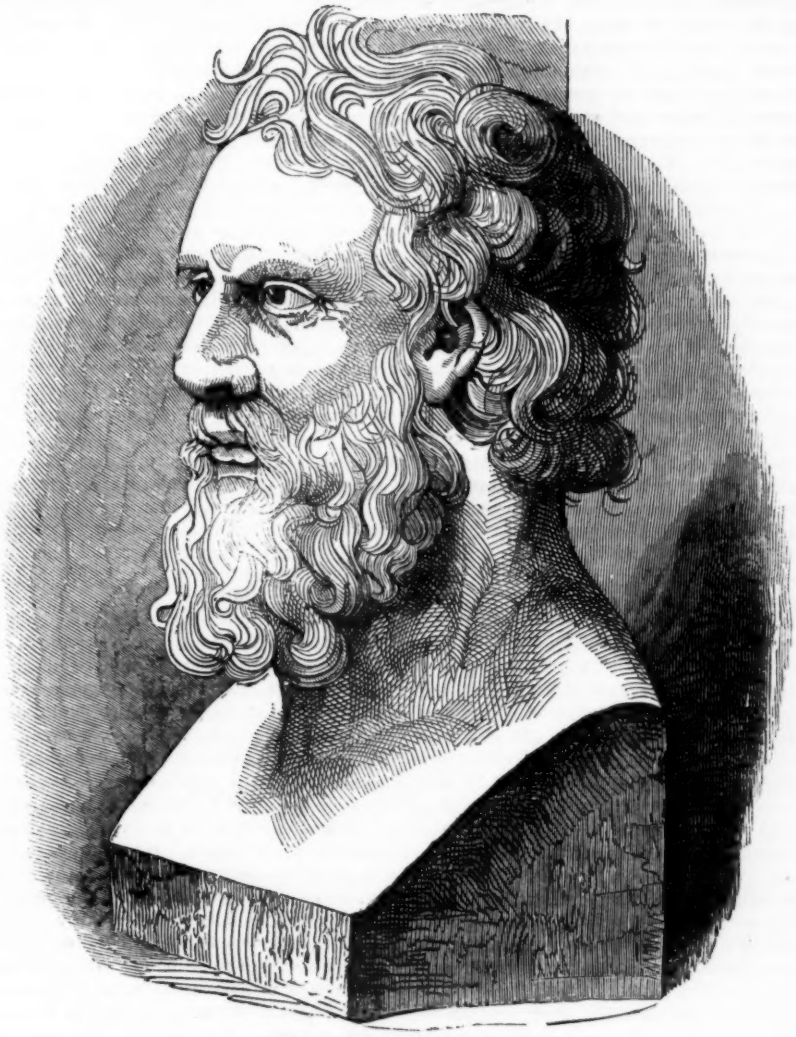
were usually intelligent men and well acquainted with the law; and the appointment of such an officer was an evidence both of the desire and necessity for improvement; in which improvement, however, small parishes could not participate. The annual overseers were the masters of the paid overseer, fixed his salary and defined his duties, and although he might be superior to them in a knowledge of the true principles of administering relief, his influence in effecting improvements was but limited.

The bodies constituted under the old poor law for the administration of relief at all analogous to the boards of guardians were the open vestries, the representative vestries, and the self-appointed vestries. The open vestry consisted solely of rate-payers who were actual occupiers of land or houses; owners, unless occupiers, were excluded, excepting in two or three special cases. The open vestries were not responsible; they were not compelled to render accounts of receipt and expenditure; and were not amenable for malversation of the parish funds. The annual overseers were generally the most influential members of the vestry, which in the agricultural districts consisted of small farmers. The vestry, though a permanent body, by the exclusion of owners of property, had temporary rather than permanent interests to serve. The open vestries became notorious for their corrupt practices. The vestryman who owned a number of small cottages endeavoured to get the parish to pay the rents of his tenants; and in return he assisted another vestryman to a profitable contract for the supply of the workhouse. The vestry was a parochial authority, and had all the petty interests inherent in such a body. Representative vestries were calculated for large towns rather than rural parishes, and from their constitution were not liable to become so corrupt as the open vestries. The representative vestry could not consist of less than five, nor more than twenty members. The parson of the parish, the churchwardens, and the annual overseers were ex-officio members, the latter being the servants of the vestry. Minutes of proceedings were to be kept, and publicity was to be given to them. In 1834, when the present poor-law was passed, the number of select vestries had been diminishing for several years. The reason probably was that these isolated bodies were not capable of stemming the evils which existed everywhere around them; and in many instances they were in fact filled by parish coteries who clamoured down attempts to put an end to profitable abuses. The self-appointed vestries were, as may be supposed, usually the most corrupt of these bodies.

A board of guardians consists of the representative or representatives of each parish in a union formed under the provisions of the Poor Law Amendment Act. They are constituted for the purpose of administering relief to the poor of the union, and assessing and levying sums necessary for such objects. They appoint all the officers of the union. The powers of the board cannot be delegated to any individual guardian, or any committee of guardians, but committees may be appointed for specific purposes, who must report their proceedings to the board. No guardian can have more than one vote; nor are votes by proxy to be taken. The expenses incidental to the office cannot be paid out of the rates. Magistrates acting for the division in which the union is situated are guardians ex-officio, with the right of voting. No overseer or union officer has a right to be present at the meetings of the board. When the board sits, the clerk of the union, who usually belongs to the legal profession, attends as the servant of the board, and takes minutes of the proceedings. The board appoint a chairman and a vice-chairman from amongst the members. A guardian cannot contract for the supply of the workhouse. It is not necessary that a parish should select as guardian a person residing in the parish, but it may send as its representative a guardian who lives in some other parish in the union: voters, however, can only vote for the guardian of the parish in which their property is rated. Women are not eligible to be elected, nor any of the paid officers of the board. Women may act as *overseers* where no other competent persons are to be found amongst the inhabitants, none being eligible but inhabitants. The qualification of guardians is fixed by the commissioners, as a uniform qualification would not be desirable, and would prove inconvenient in many districts. In no case must the property qualification exceed an annual rental of 40*l*., and the property may be situated in different parishes of the union. The electors consist of rate-payers and owners of property, and their votes are given in writing. Previous to an election voting-papers are left at the houses of persons entitled to vote, who fill them up with the name of the individual whom they are desirous of appointing a member of the board. By this arrangement the maximum number of votes is called forth, and the concurrence of numbers obtained. No loss of time is incurred; no obstruction to the free and deliberate exercise of opinion is experienced; and neither clamour nor the speciousness of a show of hands stifles the sentiments of an individual. The voting-papers are cast up by the overseers and churchwardens, who are the returning-officers, and are then delivered to the board, whose property they are. The name of the guardian selected for each parish is then published on the doors of the parish-church. An owner assessed to the poors'-rate to the amount of 50*l*. has one vote; and if for 150*l*. and upwards, six votes; under certain regulations an owner may vote by proxy. A voter may have six votes as owner and three as occupier. A rate-payer or occupier under 200*l*. has one vote; and of 400*l*. and upwards, three votes. Either owner or occupier may propose a guardian for his parish, but no person not entitled to vote can take part in the election; and a guardian cannot be nominated and elected on the same day. When the votes are equal, a new election must take place. The accounts of every union are kept on a uniform plan, and they are audited quarterly by individuals who are not members of the board. Rate-payers and owners have the right of inspecting the rules of the commissioners at all reasonable times, and free of expense. Every expedient has been adopted calculated to give weight and importance to the boards, and it is impossible that the petty interests and wretched policy which actuated a parish vestry should become predominant in a body representing the intelligence, property, and varied interests of an extensive district. The number of elected and ex-officio guardians of the Poor Law unions now formed is about 20,000. The number of Poor Law unions formed in July last was 662, and they comprised a population of 11,166,826. There were 1063 parishes not united, the population of which amounted to 2,227,923. The number of union workhouses completed or in progress was 511. The average population of the unions is about 17,000; average size rather more than 70 square miles; average number of guardians about 30.

Knowledge.—Knowledge can neither be cultivated nor adequately enjoyed by a few; and although the conditions of our existence on earth may be such as to preclude an abundant supply of the physical necessities of all who may be born, there is no such law of nature in force against that of our intellectual and moral wants. Knowledge is not, like food, destroyed by use, but rather augmented and perfected. There is no body of knowledge so complete but that it may receive correction in passing through the minds of millions. Those who admire and love knowledge for its own sake ought to wish to see its elements made accessible to all, were it only that they may be the more thoroughly examined and more effectually developed in their consequences, and receive that ductile and plastic quality which the action of minds of all descriptions, constantly moulding them to their purposes, can alone bestow.—*Sir William Herschel.*

PLATO.



[Plato.—From an antique Bust.]

Plato, the pupil and biographer of Socrates, the earliest Greek philosopher whose writings are devoted to the advancement of moral and metaphysical science, was the son of Athenian parents, but born in the island of Ægina, B.C. 429. His descent was illustrious, being derived on the mother's side from the philosopher and lawgiver Solon, and on the father's from the ancient kings of Athens. In after-times the flattery of his admirers, not content with this distinguished genealogy, ascribed to him divine honours. Apollo, the patron deity of letters, was reported to have been the author of his being. His sweetness of discourse was foreshown by the gathering of a swarm of bees upon his lips in the cradle; and Socrates, the night before he first saw Plato, was warned of the excellences of his future pupil by a vision of a cygnet, which as it sat on his knees suddenly became full fledged, and flew away with a melodious cry. We may be excused for repeating these fables, since the scarcity of authentic details concerning the life and history of the philosopher will reduce this paper to very narrow bounds. The name first given to him was Aristocles; that of Plato, under which he became celebrated, is derived from the Greek adjective which means *broad*. The time and the reason of this change of name are both uncertain: it has been accounted for by his breadth and fulness of expression, by his remarkable width of forehead, and by other etymologies more fanciful than convincing. His manly beauty has been perpetuated in the bust from which the above sketch is taken; and his bodily vigour, and successful practice of the gymnastic exercises enjoined by custom upon the Greek youth of all ranks, and to which he himself in after-life attached great importance, are indicated by the report that he contended for the prize in wrestling at two of the great national festivals, the Pythian and the Isthmian games. Painting and poetry he also cultivated: the latter with zeal certainly, and probably not without success, for he produced an epic poem, and a drama which was brought on the stage; but he burnt his poems upon becoming acquainted with Socrates, to whom he was introduced when he was about twenty years of age. During ten years he continued to be the philosopher's pupil and constant attendant; during his trial he came forward in his defence, and offered to become his surety for the payment of such fine as might be imposed. Faithful to the last, he witnessed the closing scene of that great man's life, of which he has given a beautiful and affecting description at the close of the dialogue entitled 'Phædon,' which has for its subject the

immortality of the soul, and has been ever regarded as the ablest effort of human intellect, unassisted by revelation, to prove that there is a future existence after death. This celebrated piece professes to record the conversation of Socrates upon the day of his execution. In such circumstances, the discourse naturally turned upon those expectations of the future, in reliance on which he faced death with perfect tranquillity; and the profound philosophy and lofty eloquence of this part of the composition are relieved and set off by the dramatic interest and pathos of the concluding narrative. The 'Phædon' is said to have been Cato's study immediately before he put an end to his life at Utica; a circumstance of which Addison has made use to introduce the most elaborately-wrought passage in his well-known tragedy.

After his master's death, Plato retired from Athens, and led a wandering life, frequenting the schools of the most eminent philosophers whithersoever he went. Megara was his first place of abode; and here, while the mournful details were still fresh in his memory, he is believed to have written the 'Phædon,' with its companion pieces, the 'Criton,' and the 'Defence of Socrates.' Thence he went to Cyrene, and from Cyrene to Italy, where he spent a considerable time in studying the rival systems of philosophy founded by Pythagoras and Heraclitus, both of which, to a certain extent and with certain modifications, he combined and taught when he himself became the founder of a new sect. From Italy he travelled to Egypt, in elder times the fountain and seat of science. Here, according to some authors, he was admitted by the priests to a knowledge of those mysteries, of which they only had the key, and derived from them the most profound doctrines of his philosophy. This statement, however, is not confirmed by the most credible authors; and Plato himself speaks in disparaging terms of Egyptian science in his day. Cicero attributes his visit to Egypt to the desire of improving his knowledge of astronomy, which, with others of the mathematical sciences, still flourished there; and simple curiosity would furnish a sufficient motive for travelling to a country so remarkable and closely connected with the early history of art and religion in Greece. It has been supposed that in Egypt Plato became acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures; but there appears to be no well-founded ground for this belief, which probably arose out of the clearness of his views of a future existence as compared with those of antecedent philosophers.

Upon his return to Athens, B.C. 395, Plato took up his residence adjoining, or within the precincts of, a public garden named Academia, from Academus, who bequeathed it for the use of the people. Within this garden he opened a school for instruction in the arts of disputation and philosophy: and the word *Academy* has hence obtained such celebrity as not only to denote the school and sect of which he was the founder, but to have become in modern languages a general title for any place of education. His speculations however were varied by the duties of active life; for it is on record that he served as a soldier in three battles. In B.C. 389 he visited Sicily, attracted by the curiosities, natural and artificial, of that remarkable island, in which the elder Dionysius, the celebrated tyrant of Syracuse, then bore the chief sway. The despot, according to Diogenes Laertius, took offence at Plato's freedom of spirit, and sold him into slavery, from which however he was soon redeemed by his friends. It is said, that on a fear being expressed on the part of Dionysius lest Plato should render his name infamous in his writings, the latter replied, that he was too much occupied by philosophy to trouble himself about Dionysius. It is also said, that under the reign of the younger Dionysius Plato revisited Sicily on two occasions; but the evidence of these latter visits is doubtful.

Honoured and beloved, with a reputation established throughout Greece as a statesman and law-giver, Plato declined through life to take any active part in political affairs, though, as has been intimated, he did not shun those active duties which devolved on him in common with all other citizens. A life so passed, in the pursuit and teaching of abstract truth, affords little material for the biographer: but it is not to be omitted that Aristotle, his great rival in fame and influence, was Plato's pupil from the age of eighteen, during the long period of twenty years. Plato died aged about 81, in the first year of the 108th Olympiad, B.C. 347.

The writings extant under Plato's name are numerous and bulky. Seven of these, however, are acknowledged, by general consent, to be spurious: and modern critics, without precisely agreeing as to those to be rejected, have stigmatized many others as of doubtful authenticity. Bekker, the latest and best editor, rejects ten more. Von Ast, another German critic, carries his scepticism still further, and is of opinion that twelve other dialogues are the work of imitators. A list of these, with some notice of the reasons for receiving or rejecting them, will be found in the 'Encyclopædia Metropolitana,' historical division, chap. xix., p. 79; in which chapter an outline of the Platonic philosophy is given. Another sketch of the great philosopher's opinions is contained in the 'Biographie Universelle.' But we rise from the perusal of these papers satisfied that, even in able hands, the subject scarcely admits of concise and popular illustration, or of being made familiar, except to those who are willing to bestow upon it time and attention commensurate with its extent and difficulty.

Except the letters bearing his name, but admitted pretty generally to be spurious, Plato's writings are in the form of dialogue. In these he himself never appears: the speakers are Socrates and his contemporaries; the companions with whom he associated, and the sophists, the professional teachers of a false philosophy, whom it was his chief pleasure to confute and ridicule. But in all cases it is Socrates who is the chief person, whether in the grave and eloquent exposition of his own opinions, or while pretending to seek for information from his self-complacent adversaries, slyly entrapping them, from one admission to another, into absurdity and contradiction. Of this peculiar *ironical* mode of disputation, of which Socrates was the great master, other specimens may be seen in the 'Memorable Things' of Xenophon: but it is found in Plato in its chief refinement and perfection. In one respect, however, it is to be lamented that Plato adopted this mode of writing. It leaves in doubt how much belongs to the master, how much to the pupil: for there is no doubt but that Plato has delivered much under the name of Socrates, which never was taught by that philosopher.

As the founder of a school of philosophy, Plato has exercised a permanent and lasting influence. Speusippus first, then Xenocrates, succeeded him in the chair of what was afterwards called the Old Academy. Succeeding teachers introduced changes into the doctrines of the school, which in its later phases was called the Middle and the New Academy; although some writers, more properly perhaps, admit only of an Old and New Academy. Of the latter, Cicero was a distinguished ornament, and did much to propagate and extend it, by showing, for the first time, that the Latin language could be made a fit vehicle for the reception of the Greek philosophy, and teaching, in the language of his country, lessons which before were only accessible through the medium of a foreign tongue.

Under the Roman empire the philosophy of Plato was revived, under a corrupt form, by a sect of whom the most remarkable were Plotinus and Porphyry; men of lofty intellect and vivid imagination, who stamped upon their doctrines that mystical and dreamy character which in later days rendered the epithet Platonic almost one of reproach. That Porphyry was a violent enemy of Christianity, contributed unquestionably to the discredit of his

philosophy, which in the middle ages was entirely superseded in the European schools by that of Aristotle. At the revival of learning the philosopher emerged from his obscurity. Marsilio Ficino, a Florentine, deeply versed in the mysteries of the latter Platonists, published the first edition of their great original; as did the learned Cardinal Bessarion a masterly defence of the philosopher, whose popularity nevertheless has always fallen short of his fame and excellence. By the laborious and learned students of Germany he has been best appreciated: in our own country, though the most illustrious names have paid due honour to him (we may briefly name Bacon, Milton, Cudworth, Berkeley, Gray, Coleridge, &c.), yet his works have been 'caviare to the million.' Berkeley observed a century ago that 'the greatest men had ever a high esteem for Plato, whose writings are the touchstone of a hasty and shallow mind; whose philosophy has been the admiration of ages, which supplied patriots, magistrates, and lawgivers to the most flourishing states, as well as fathers to the church, and doctors to the schools. Albeit, in these days the depths of that old learning are rarely fathomed; and yet it were happy for these lands if our young nobility and gentry, instead of modern maxims, would imbibe the notions of the great men of antiquity. But in these free-thinking times, many an empty head is shook at Aristotle and Plato, as well as at the Holy Scriptures. And the writings of those celebrated antients are by most men treated on a foot with the dry and barbarous lucubrations of the schoolmen.' In our own time, and our own universities, the reproach of this neglect has been partly removed. That Plato should ever be widely popular, even among scholars, is hardly to be expected, abstruse and complicated as his doctrines are, so that the acutest minds have professed their inability to comprehend them in their full extent. At the same time there are many parts of his writings, more especially those which relate to the trial and death of Socrates, which may be read by every one with pleasure as well as advantage. It would be a great mistake to suppose that Plato is always lecturing: his dialogues are enlivened by the greatest variety; pathos, wit, humour in its most grotesque form, a lively feeling of dramatic effect, give a charm to them which can be adequately expressed neither by description or translation. And it may safely be said that no one unversed in Plato has a full sense of the delicacy of the Greek language, or power as an instrument of philosophic inquiry and analysis.

The chief English translators of Plato are Sydenham and Taylor: the former translated twelve dialogues only, nine of which are reprinted in the complete translation published by Taylor. Of these two translators, Sydenham, a man of taste and talent, but unfortunate in the circumstances of his life and death, is by far the abler: Spens also has given what is said to be a faithful version of the 'Republic.' Bishop Berkeley's 'Dialogues' are well calculated to give the English reader some notion of the manner and spirit of the dialogues of Plato, upon which they are modelled.

SUBMARINE NAVIGATION.

The navigation of a vessel under the surface of the water has often been discussed, and plans for effecting this object have more than once been tried with some success; and although the motives which led to the attempt have usually been rather discreditable than otherwise, there can be no doubt that upon occasion the faculty of travelling under water might be found useful.

If, on the coming on of a storm, a ship could, as the little nautilus is said to do on a like occasion, furl up her sails, and descend to the depths of ocean, to emerge again when calm should be restored, the danger of foundering at sea would evidently be much reduced, and the timid might venture to undertake a voyage without apprehension. It may be feared however that dangers of another sort would more than compensate for the exemption from storms on the deep sea; and in shallow waters the expedient would be obviously inapplicable. Even if perfect safety from the ordinary sources of danger could thus be obtained, it must be at such an expense of time, space, and convenience, as to be out of the reach of most persons.

Writers of the middle ages have mentioned submarine vessels, though somewhat vaguely, and generally rather as being possible than as actually put in practice; some have been more particular, but their accounts are equally fanciful, and Alexander the Great, or some other ancient worthy, is usually the hero of the tale. About the sixteenth century we come to something more positive: the inhabitants of the Ukraine are stated to have been at that epoch in the habit of using such vessels, in order to be able to escape from the Turkish galleys, by which they were frequently pursued. Soon after we have a more distinct account of a submarine boat nearer home. Cornelius van Drebbel, a mechanician and writer of some renown in his day, constructed a boat in London which he navigated beneath the surface of the Thames. His vessel contained twelve rowers, besides passengers, and it is said that on one occasion King James I. went on board for the sake of witnessing the experiment. To make the story more wonderful, Van Drebbel is stated by Boyle to have found out a liquid which would restore to its original vital state air vitiated by breathing, so that he could remain as long as he pleased under water. If this be true, Van Drebbel's chemical science was greater even than his mechanical skill; but, to judge from our present knowledge of chemistry, there can be no doubt that Boyle was misinformed on this matter: possibly the liquid might be a pretence to hide the real mode of obtaining air by tubes from above the surface. Mersenne, in 1644, speaking of this vessel, says: "It is known that a ship was built in England by Cornelius Drebbel, which swam under the water;" but although he speaks of glass, pebbles, and horn, for giving light in such ships, and proposes a leather tube for admitting air, he says nothing of Drebbel's liquid, which he was sufficiently credulous to have fully believed, if he had heard of it.

The treatise of Mersenne on submarine navigation is part of a very curious work treating on almost everything. He speaks of ships that may be made of either metal or wood, to run with wheels on the bottom of the sea, and where the sea was too deep, to be moved with oars. He dwells on the safety from storms in such vessels, because, as he says, their force never reaches a greater depth than three or four fathoms: he says such a ship should be in the form of a fish, but alike at both ends; that the oars should be broad like paddles, and easily turned, so as to make the ship go backwards or forwards, upwards or downwards. He thinks persons might remain a month at the bottom of the sea in such a vessel; that they might grind corn with mills moved by asses, bake bread, cook their victuals, and carry on trade and manufactures. A little further on he says it would be even possible to colonize the bed of the sea, and live all one's life there: he has no doubt the colonists would learn in time to get from the sea enough to live upon, although they might occasionally come up to procure wine or water, or a supply of fresh air. "How easily," he exclaims, "could they reach in this way the north or south poles, as it is well known the sea never freezes to the bottom!" After this he takes a still wider flight, and thinks it not quite impossible that a man might in time become a fish, and live altogether without air, although he admits it to be very doubtful; but he points to the example of rope-dancers and jugglers, who by practice learn to do many things which seem at first equally impossible, and which, if he had not himself seen, he could not have believed, had they been sworn to. "Who knows," says he, "whether the lungs may not be so refreshed by the water, that

men may do without air, as many fishes do; and perhaps the air which is mixed with the water may serve for this purpose." Mersenne frequently writes as if he had really done a good deal of what he talks about; but one or two expressions show that he had never seen a submarine ship. Thus he says that if any body will make such a vessel, he will show how to cook food in it. A few years after Mersenne, Bishop Wilkins published his 'Mathematical Magic,' in which he writes of submarine navigation much in the style of Mersenne: his immediate object seems to have been the finding of articles which had been lost by shipwreck; but his successors have generally aimed at producing a warlike engine, which should come secretly under a ship, and blow it into the air with gunpowder. This was tried in the Thames more than a century ago by Dr. Desaguliers; and in 1777 by the American Bushnell in the river Delaware. Bushnell's boat, which has been well described, was constructed with great ingenuity. Its shape has been compared to that of a tortoise, but it was more like a gigantic walnut, only a little flattened. It was made of metal, well closed on all sides, except at one hole, where the operator entered, and this he closed after him. There was no method of procuring air when beneath the surface; so that it was necessary to get up as soon as the air was consumed. All operations were performed by rods passing air-tight through the sides; one rod moved a sort of spiral oar, shaped like the worm of an endless screw, and standing perpendicularly above it: by turning this backwards or forwards, the vessel sank or rose; another rod turned a similar oar, placed horizontally, which moved the vessel forwards or backwards; but the whole machine was first brought as nearly as practicable to the specific gravity of the surrounding medium by opening a stop-cock to admit water, which might be driven out again by a forcing-pump. A barometer-gauge showed the depth which the vessel had reached, and a compass the direction of its motion; and as a candle would have consumed too much air, bits of phosphorus were placed upon these instruments to show their indications. A large quantity of lead was attached to the bottom of the machine, to serve as ballast, and of this about two hundredweight could be detached by the turning of a screw, which would leave the vessel light enough to rise rapidly to the surface in case of danger from want of air. There were many other contrivances for various necessary purposes, and the whole construction showed an ingenuity that might have been valuable; but the spirit of modern times is against such a treacherous mode of warfare as that intended by this machine; and the failures incident to the awkwardness of a first attempt threw a discredit over the invention.

The next experiment was that of Fulton, who in 1801 made a vessel, which he called the Nautilus, nearly on Bushnell's plan, except that he had a copper vessel to contain condensed air for respiration. This was in France; but he met with no encouragement from Buonaparte, and he was induced soon after to offer his services to the British government, under whose auspices he tried some experiments in England, which failed of their purpose. He subsequently returned to America, where he appears to have had more success. At his death in 1815 he was employed in building a ship which was intended to be just on a level with the surface of the sea; so that a man could put his head out of a hole in the deck to see what was going on. Captain Montgery, a few years ago, proposed to build a ship of war, which he called l'Invisible · he gives minute directions for its construction; but we are not aware that he put his plans in execution.

The most interesting attempt at submarine navigation in recent times is that of the well-known smuggler Johnston, who was employed by some wealthy parties to liberate Napoleon from his prison of St. Helena. Johnston's vessel, which was built in the Thames, was nearly 100 feet long, and was intended to float on a level with the surface, or at least to sink very little below it. It was proposed that this ship should approach St. Helena towards evening, and that it should wait until the illustrious captive should receive notice of the neighbourhood of his liberator. It was expected that he would be ready to embark immediately, and it was then intended to depart for the United States. The vessel was nearly finished when the British government received notice of its destination. It was consequently seized, and the death of Napoleon, which occurred about the same period, put an end to the scheme altogether. Johnston was afterwards employed in making experiments with a view of destroying the French fleet at Cadiz; but the dissolution of the Cortes put an end to his enterprise.

On Public Royal Feasts in the East.—On certain periodical festivals, and on other occasions, it has long been, and still is, a custom of Muslim princes to give public feasts to all classes of their subjects in the palace. El-Makreezee quotes a curious account of the feasts which were given on the festival following Ramadán to the inhabitants of Cairo, by the Fátimee Khaleefehs. At the upper end of a large saloon was placed the sereer (or sofa) of the monarch, upon which he sat with the Wezeer on his right. Upon this seat was placed a round silver table, with various delicacies, of which they alone ate. Before it, and extending nearly from the seat to the other extremity of the saloon, was set up a kind of table or platform (simát) of painted wood, resembling a number of benches placed together, ten cubits (or about eighteen or nineteen feet) in width. Along the middle of this were arranged twenty-one enormous dishes, each containing twenty-one baked sheep, three years old, and fat; together with fowls, chickens, and young pigeons, in number three hundred and fifty of each kind; all of which were piled together in an oblong form, to the height of the stature of a man, and enclosed with dry sweetmeat. The spaces between these dishes were occupied by nearly five hundred other dishes of earthenware, each of which contained seven fowls and was filled up with sweetmeats of various kinds. The table was strewed with flowers; and cakes of bread made of the finest flour were arranged along each side. There were also two great edifices of sweetmeats, each weighing seventeen hundred-weights, which were carried thither by porters with shoulder-poles; and one of these was placed at the commencement, and the other at the close, of this sumptuous banquet. When the Khaleefeh and Wezeer had taken their seats upon the sofa, the officers of state, who were distinguished by neck-rings or collars, and the inferior members of the court, seated themselves in the order of their respective ranks; and, when they had eaten, gave place to others. Two such feasts, given on the festival after Ramadán and on the "great festival," cost four thousand deenárs, or about two thousand pounds sterling.—two military officers, named Ibn Fáiz and Ed-Deylemee, distinguished themselves at these feasts in a very remarkable manner. Each of them used to eat a baked sheep, and ten fowls dressed with sweetmeats, and ten pounds of sweetmeats besides, and was presented with a quantity of food carried away from the feast to his house, together with a large sum of money. One of them had been a prisoner at 'Askalán; and after he had remained there some time, the person into whose power he had fallen jestingly told him that if he would eat a calf belonging to him, the flesh of which weighed several hundred-weights, he would emancipate him. This feat he accomplished, and thus he obtained his liberation. Several cases of a similar kind to those just mentioned are instanced in a late work. One, of a man who, as related by Vopiscus, was brought before the emperor Maximilian, and who devoured a whole calf, and was proceeding to eat up a sheep, but was prevented. Another, of a man who commenced his repast (in the presence of Dr. Boehmen, of Wittenberg) by eating a raw sheep and a sucking pig, and, by way of dessert, swallowed sixty pounds of prunes, stones and all.—*Notes to Lane's Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, part x.

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